Mr. Joel Berez July 15, 1988
President
Infocom, Inc.
125 CambridgePark Drive
Cambridge, MA 02140

Dear Joel:

This is a revised proposal for a game based on the Wizard of Oz.

When I first suggested a Oz parody, the idea was enthusiastically received by many Infopeople. Although my first proposal failed to fulfill the promise of that initial excitement, it still seems that there is a great idea lurking in here somewhere, and that it is worth it to find that idea and convert it into a game.

I believe Infocom's initial enthusiastic reaction is one that will be repeated in stores across the country. People will see the game and say, "Oh! A Wizard of Oz Parody. What a neat idea!" Our problem is not how to get people interested in the idea, The problem is delivering a product that lives up to those initial expectations.

With that in mind, I have put together the proposal that follows, and I look forward to receiving your reaction to it.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Bates
President

OZ PARODY

1) This is not an Immortal Legend game. It is not an attempt to create a story that would fit into the existing body of literature on the subject.

2) The game is a spoof, and it needs a title that presents it as such. Although the following titles could not be used for the game, they convey the flavor that I'm looking for:

Godzilla meets the Wizard of Oz
Attack of the Killer Oz-moids
Fast Times at Oz High
Invasion of the Oz-snatchers

Dorothy Does Oz
Ozzie Dearest.

3) The game's action takes place in the Oz that we remember from the movie; but there are incongruous features in the landscape. Somewhat as the Wiz used New York City as its Oz, this game will draw on elements of the Southern California landscape and 80's life-style for humor.

4) The cover art needs to support this comedic and possibly racy theme. One possibility is to show Dorothy and the Lion in a hot tub, with the Tin Man and the Scarecrow standing by, and the Yellow Brick Road winding off into the distance. Depending on how racy or suggestive we want to get, we can clothe Dorothy in anything from a gingham bathing suit to virtually nothing.

5) With the right title and cover art, I don't believe the "sacredness" of Oz is going to be too much of a problem. The people who buy the game will certainly not be expecting a tame re-telling of the Oz story. (And those who want such a treatment should surely be able to figure out that this isn't the place to look for it.) Nevertheless, I realize that the boundaries are somewhat tighter than they might be with other parodies and I intend to respect them. For example, I wouldn't require Dorothy to perform scatological activities as the solution to a puzzle. (What the player wants to try on his own, however, is a different story).

6) The player should not believe that he is in Southern California. He should truly believe that he is in Oz, but that Oz and its inhabitants are slightly skewed from the way they were in the movie. Consequently, I envision the taking the geography primarily from the movie, rather than from California. For example, the letters EMERALD CITY might appear high on a hillside overlooking the town; and although there will not be a beach or an ocean (because there were none in Oz), there might be a lifeguard sitting on a chair overlooking a field of sunbathers.

7) Dorothy will still have the basic goals that she had in the movie. She will land in Oz and need to go see the Wizard. However, some of the humor and puzzles will come from Oz being a more practical place than it is in the film. For example:

a) The Yellow Brick Road is a toll-road. She has to pay to travel on it.

b) She has to eat, and the only place that food is available is from fast-food joints that sell things like Baumburgers and L. Frankfurters.

c) When she has to buy things, she uses a credit card that Glinda gave her. She starts off with 50 Ozmids credit (for dropping a house on the Wicked Witch of the East), and she has to accumulate more in the course of the game to get everything done. (100 Ozmids, of course, equals one Wizbuck.)

d) The bubble that Glinda travels on is actually a sort of inter-city bus that is a lot more glamorous on the outside than on the inside. Dorothy and her companions can travel on it, but they do have to pay the tired, bored driver.

e) When the Tin Man gets banged up, Dorothy has to take him to a body shop. The mechanic says, "Well lemme see. I'm kinda backed up right now. I got a bronzed goddess who's gotta be back at the tanning booth by noon, and a man of steel who needs some structural work. But I think I can fit you in. Lemme put him up on the lift and give you an estimate."

8) The plot follows the movie in its broadest details, but varies from it in the particulars.

Dorothy gets caught up in the tornado, and her house lands on the Wicked Witch of the East. Glinda comes in on the 2:15 bubble and tells Dorothy that the only person who can help her return home is the Wizard.

When Dorothy starts off down the yellow brick road, she does not simply happen upon her companions. She must do something to "acquire" them. She may have to buy some straw, for example, and build her own scarecrow. Or she may have to find a way to free the Lion from a zoo or circus.

In the course of the game, it will be necessary for her to have "activated" each of the companions, as there will be tasks to perform that only they can do. For example, they may come upon a cute and lovable - but dangerous - furry little creature (like a Tribble from Star Trek). The

animal may have to be killed for them to advance (or survive), but Dorothy can't kill it because it is too cute, the scarecrow can't figure out how to kill it, and the Lion is afraid of it. Only the Tin Man - because he has no heart - can perform the nasty but necessary deed.

In the same way, there will be a task that only a person with no brain can do, and one that cannot be performed by anyone with courage.

Once they arrive in Emerald City, they discover that getting in to see Oz is a series of puzzles in itself. When they finally get through, they find that the Wizard lives in a mansion, is constantly surrounded by beautiful women, smokes a pipe, and usually wears pajamas.

Oz tells them that he will grant their wishes if they will bring him the mascara stick of the Wicked Witch of the West. She turns out to be a make-up laden televangelist who is constantly denouncing the Wizard's life-style. When they solve the puzzle and get her mascara stick, she cries such volumes of tears that she melts herself.

Upon their return to the Wizard, he tells the scarecrow that he doesn't need a brain, what he needs is a job he can do without one. He offers to make him a Network TV executive in charge of prime-time scheduling. Because the Tin Man has no heart, Oz offers him a job as an agent. Because the Lion has no courage, Oz tells him he could get work as a yes-man for a producer. Each of the characters has the dignity to turn down these jobs.

Oz gives Dorothy the option of returning home to Kansas, or moving into the mansion with him and becoming next month's centerspread. Perhaps we will leave it up to the player to choose.